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GENERAL STATISTICS BRANCH

A REVIEW
of
EMPLOYMENT
in
CANADA
during
1923

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Published by Authority of the Hon. Thos. A. Low, M. P.

Minister of Trade and Commerce.

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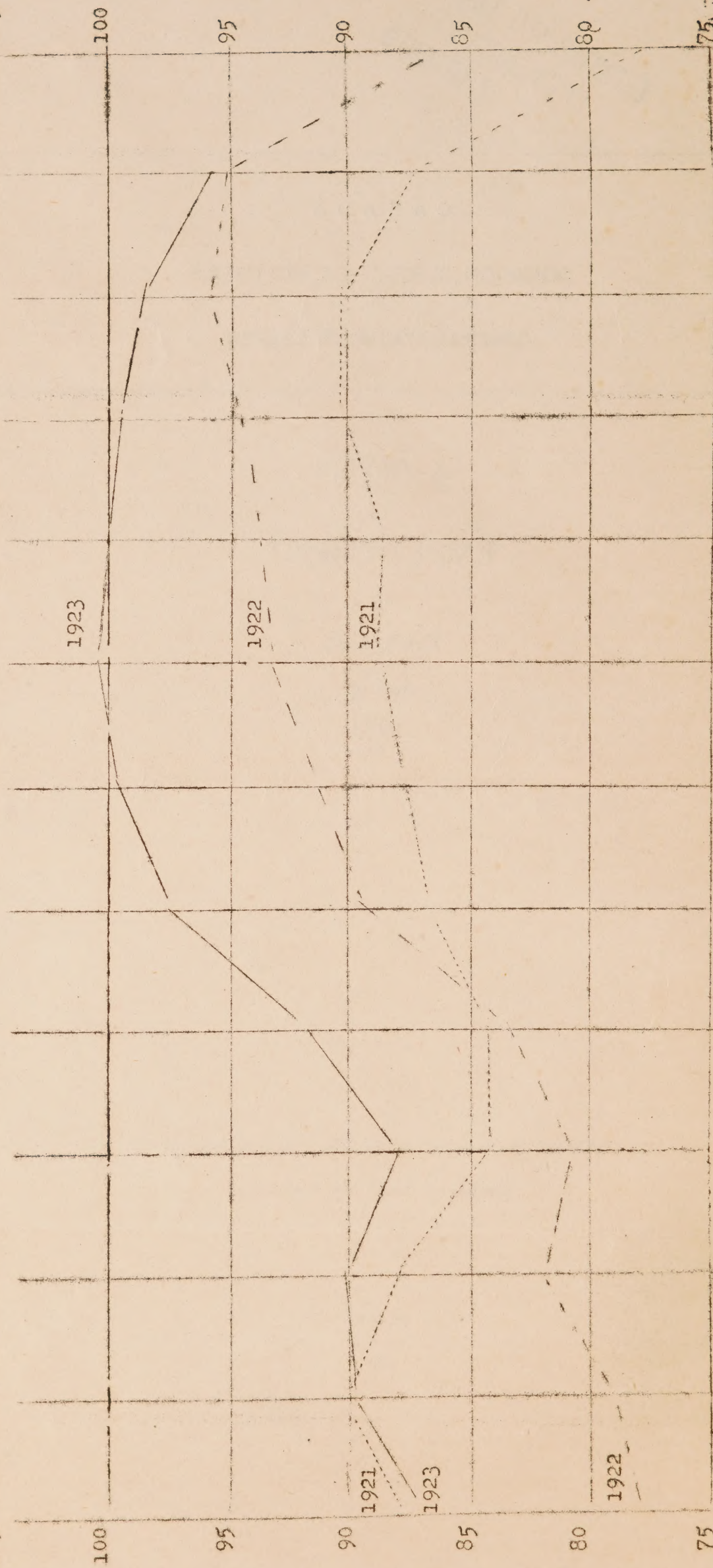
OTTAWA

1924

EMPLOYMENT AS REPORTED BY EMPLOYERS

105

105



Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. May June July Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec. Jan.

The curve is based on the number of employees actually at work on the first day of the month as indicated by the firms reporting, in comparison with the number of employees they reported in January, 1920.

DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS
GENERAL STATISTICS BRANCH
OTTAWA, CANADA.

A Review of Employment in Canada during 1923.

Issued January 5, 1923.

Dominion Statistician: R. H. Coats, B.A., F.S.S., F.R.S.C.
Chief, General Statistics: S. A. Cudmore, M.A., F.S.S.

Employment during 1923 showed on the whole considerable expansion; the year opened with the usual dullness due to inventories and general winter slackness, but speedy and almost uninterrupted recovery was indicated in succeeding reports. There was the customary brief lull in operations over Easter, but the upward movement was resumed early in April, continuing steadily until the beginning of August. During these four months approximately 99,000 persons were added to the payrolls of the reporting firms, representing an increase of well over 10 per cent. The labour requirements of the farmers to harvest the largest crop on record then accelerated the fall contraction of industrial employment, since men were drawn from other industries for this purpose. As agriculture is not represented in these statistics, the corresponding increase that occurred in that industry was not reflected in the index number. From the high point of 100.2 on August 1 the index declined by slight degrees until the beginning of December, when employment fell off from the November level by somewhat over three points. The August figure, it may be remarked, was higher than the base, the first time since the end of 1920 that the index has exceeded the January, 1920, level.

With minor fluctuations, the curve of employment in 1923, as shown in the accompanying chart, followed the same general course pursued in both 1922 and 1921, although it was consistently on a higher level. The peak of employment during the past year, as indicated by the reporting firms, was reached at the beginning of August, whereas the 1922 high point occurred in November and that for 1921 in October.

The expansion registered in 1923 was fairly generally distributed among the provinces and in the various industries covered in these statistics; some 80,000 more persons were employed by the firms making returns on December 1 than on January 1, 1923. During the year under review, an average of about 5,800 firms reported that they employed an average payroll of some 777,900 workers, varying between 707,700 on January 1 and 823,605 on August 1, the peak date. Manufacturing, construction, mining, logging and services shared in the improvement; trade also was rather more active.

Employment by Provinces.

The situation in all provinces was better on December 1 than on January 1. The latter date, on account of the numerous shutdowns for inventories and over the holidays, always represents a slack period of employment, except in a very few industries for which seasonal conditions are favourable. The improvement that occurred during 1923 may be seen in the tables of index numbers by districts on page 6.

Maritime Provinces.— In the Maritime Provinces the peak of activity was reached on September 1, when the index stood at 101.4. Employment diminished during the next three months and at the beginning of December the index number was 91.2. The reopening of the winter ports prevented the index from declining still further and it is expected that the customary winter activity in transportation in these provinces will continue to keep up the level of employment.

Quebec.- The index number in Quebec stood some 15 points higher on December 1 than it had on January 1, 1923; this province reported the most pronounced expansion of any during the year. Increased activity was indicated in manufactures, construction and services, but trade employed fewer persons, chiefly owing to the closing of a large department store.

Ontario.- In Ontario improvement was almost steadily maintained from the beginning of the year until September, between which month and December there was a falling off of about five points, affecting some 17,000 persons. Firms in Ontario employ over 40 per cent of the total number of workers covered in these reports; fluctuations in that province, therefore, exercise a very marked effect upon employment conditions throughout Canada. Contractions in seasonal industries chiefly caused the declines recently shown; logging, which usually absorbs a large proportion of those released from other industries in the early fall and winter, was not so active in 1923 as in the same period of 1922, partly owing to a lack of snow. Manufacturing as a whole was slacker, the leather, rubber, musical instrument and textile industries, in particular, reporting a less favourable situation than in the previous year. On the other hand, pulp, paper, electric current, iron, steel, mineral, non-ferrous metal, tobacco and electrical apparatus plants employed larger working forces than in the preceding twelve months.

Prairie Provinces.- In the Prairie Provinces, employment, after a partial and brief recovery on February 1, declined until the first of April; an upward movement then set in and continued during May, June and July, the index number on August 1 reaching 104.3. The following four months saw some contractions; but at the beginning of December the situation was slightly better than in any other provinces although it was not quite so good as at the same period of 1922.

British Columbia.- The most pronounced revival as compared with previous years was indicated in British Columbia, where the index number rose to 107.2 at the beginning of August. Declines were recorded in succeeding months, but the index number at the beginning of December was still high, standing at 97.8; this was over two points higher than in December, 1922. Pulp, paper and electric current plants, logging, metallic ore mining, transportation, construction and trade were more active during the twelve months ending December 1, 1923, but coal mines and sawmills were slacker.

Employment by Cities.

Special tabulations were made in 1923 for six cities, but figures for 1922 are not available for Ottawa and Hamilton and no tabulations by cities were made in 1921. A very favourable situation in recent months has been indicated in Montreal, where the index number increased from 79.8 at the beginning of January to 99.1 on November 1. A decline of between five and six points was recorded at the beginning of December, when the index number was very slightly lower than on December 1, 1922. Manufacturing in this city was fairly active during the year and improvement was also indicated in other lines of work. In Toronto the year opened with a more favourable situation than in Montreal, but the improvement registered in the following months was not as pronounced as in the latter city. The highest point attained by the index number was slightly over 90, recorded on December 1. The substantial improvement shown in the construction industries during the summer was largely offset by seasonal dullness in textiles and in some other branches of manufacturing. The returns for Ottawa indicated proportionally a more favourable situation than in any other city, the index number rising to 110.2 at the beginning of July. By the commencement of December this had declined to 94.3, owing to curtailment of operations in lumber and pulp mills and to the despatching of workers from that centre to the logging camps. Employment in construction was also very active during the summer. The situation in Hamilton did not show as much fluctuation as in Ottawa; the highest point attained by the index number (93.3) was only about twelve points above the low level indicated at the beginning of January. This was partly due to dullness in textiles, iron, steel and other manufactures. The situation in Winnipeg was most favourable at the beginning of January, when the

index number stood at 92.6. Construction in that city was not as active as in previous years. In Vancouver conditions during the summer were better than at any period of 1922; the index at the beginning of December was above that for any other city, standing at 98.1. This was well over seven points higher than on December 1 of the preceding year. Manufacturing in this city was fairly active during the summer and transportation afforded increased employment.

Employment in Manufacturing.

The volume of employment afforded in manufacturing as a whole was higher during 1923 than in both 1922 and 1921. At the beginning of the year the index number had fallen to 78.1; owing to shutdowns for inventories and holidays and to general winter dullness; moderate but fairly steady improvement was recorded during the following months with only one interruption, due to Easter slackness. While at the beginning of December the index number had declined to 88.2, it was very slightly higher than at the same period of the year before and nearly nine points above the level of December, 1921. The manufacturing industries employ approximately 55 per cent of the workers reported by all the firms making returns and therefore exercise a marked effect upon the general situation..

Iron and Steel.- In the iron and steel division, which employs about 15 per cent of the total number engaged in all industries, employment increased considerably towards the summer but the autumn saw a return to the customary winter slackness. Automobile and railway car shops were well employed during the year, the index number at the beginning of September rising to 105.9. The highest point attained during the preceding year was 97.2, reached at the beginning of November. Employment in rolling and forging mills in the Maritime Provinces was somewhat disturbed by labour disputes during the summer, but activity increased later in the year. Ship-building, though on a very low level as compared with the years during and immediately after the war, showed slight improvement in 1923.

Textiles.- Employment in textile works on the whole was rather quiet during the year, but the situation at the beginning of December was better than at the beginning of January, when many temporary shutdowns had affected the situation considerably. Some recovery was noted in knitting and fabric mills during September and October and in garment factories in the former month.

Lumber Products.- The index number of employment in the lumber division during the summer of 1923 rose to a level considerably higher than in both 1922 and 1921. During the first seven months of the year over 20,000 workers were added to the payrolls of the reporting concerns; some 17,000 of these were released in the seasonal contractions recorded during the autumn and winter, but the index number stood over 6 points higher on December 1 than on January 1. This improvement was mainly due to activity in sawmills. Furniture and other woodworking factories employed on the whole a fairly constant number of workers during the year. The pulp and paper industry was also active during 1923, the index number being above the 100 point for nine of the twelve months. This industry had also shown considerable expansion during 1922.

Rubber.- The situation in rubber was not so favourable; recovery was indicated during January, 1923, from the year-end losses of December, 1922, and moderate improvement was registered during the next few months. This, however, was soon offset by extensive declines during the period July 1 to November 1. Although some revival was indicated at the beginning of December, the index number stood only about three points higher than on January 1, 1923, when substantial losses had been recorded in rubber factories.

Other Manufacturing Industries.- The tobacco, distilled and malt liquors division was more fully engaged than in the preceding year, there being a general upward movement during 1923. The expansion

in the clay, glass and stone industries that began with the revival in building in 1922, continued during 1923. The production of electric current and of electrical appliances afforded greatly increased employment during 1923, carrying on the upward swing that commenced in the preceding year. The leather and shoe industries showed improvement in the autumn of 1923, but the tendency during the greater part of the year was retrogressive, and employment on December 1 was practically on the same level as on January 1. The canning season caused the usual large increases in personnel in the edible plant products group during the summer and autumn, while chocolate and confectionery works reported increased activity towards the fall, in anticipation of holiday trade. Employment in this industry was very much the same as in 1922 on the whole, showing parallel movement. The seasonal trend was also apparent in the edible animal products division, in which fish canning and curing operations caused substantial improvement during the spring and summer. Reaction from this expansion, supplementing seasonal curtailment during the fall in creameries and dairies, resulted in severe contractions later on in the year. Abattoirs and meat packing plants on the whole afforded less employment than in preceding years, continuing the downward tendency that was indicated in this industry during 1922. Fur factories reported considerable additions to staffs; the number employed in this industry is, however, comparatively small. Brass, bronze, copper, nickel and other non-ferrous metals smelters and works showed expansion during 1923, the index number standing about 18 points higher on December 1 than at the opening of the year. The mineral products group was also active. Petroleum works, in particular, recorded larger working forces and gas plants were busier.

Employment in other Industries.

Logging.- Employment in logging showed the customary seasonal trends; operations in the early fall of 1923 were delayed in some districts by inability to obtain help, owing to the harvest demands upon the labour market. The lack of snow during succeeding months also retarded operations in some centres. The index number in this industry was very much higher during the early part of 1923 than in the same period of the previous year, but at the beginning of December and November it was slightly lower than in those months of 1922. The monthly average number of persons employed by the firms reporting during 1923 was over 23,000, while during 1922 the firms making returns recorded an average payroll of slightly more than 16,000 men.

Mining.- Employment in mining on the whole was better than at any time in 1922. The index number in the group as a whole was above the 100 mark for all but three months of the year, attaining a high point of 105.9 at the beginning of December. The improvement was especially pronounced in metallic ore mines, where there was no break in the series of increases recorded from the beginning of February until December 1. Some fluctuations were recorded in the mining of non-metallic minerals other than coal, but the tendency was generally favourable and the index number stood some 14 points higher than at the beginning of December, 1922. Coal mining was scarcely as active as in the preceding year, although an upward tendency was in evidence from August until December.

Communication and Transportation.- The communication industries reported steady expansion during 1923, telegraphs and telephones both sharing in the improvement. Considerable activity was indicated in transportation, especially on steam railways. Employment on electric railways, in cartage, shipping and stevedoring was slightly less than during 1922, although a substantial volume of employment was afforded in both divisions during the year. A very high level of activity had been indicated on street railways in 1922, largely owing to an extensive program of building on the Toronto municipal street railway. In transportation the peak of employment occurred at the beginning of November, when efforts were being made to hasten the movement of the grain crop.

Construction and Maintenance.- The index number of employment in the construction and maintenance division at its peak on August 1 (163.7) stood some 14 points higher than the high point for 1922, which also occurred in August. It was, moreover, nearly 40 points above the high level of 1921. All three branches of the industry shared in the marked expansion. The index number of employment in railway construction reached a higher level than at any period of 1922, 1921 or 1920. The volume of employment afforded in building and highway construction was larger than in either 1921 or 1922. The greatest improvement in railway construction occurred in the Prairie Provinces; building construction in Ontario and Quebec was especially active, while the most pronounced increases in employment on highways were reported in Ontario and the Maritime district.

Services.- Hotels and restaurants afforded considerably more employment than in the two preceding years, and other branches of the service group, especially laundries, reported favourable conditions.

Trade.- Employment in trade was fairly steadily maintained during the year. There was the usual after-Christmas dullness with some recovery during the summer and considerable expansion as Christmas again approached. Wholesale establishments registered moderate but steady improvement during the entire year.

The tables on pages 6 and 7 give the index numbers of employment by provinces, cities and main industrial groups for 1923, 1922 and where available, for 1921. These index numbers are based upon the monthly payrolls reported by the employers making returns in comparison with the number the same firms employed in January, 1920, as 100.

Note.- The number employed in January, 1920, is taken as 100 in every case.

TABLE I. Index Numbers of Employment by Districts.

	<u>Maritime Provinces</u>	<u>Quebec</u>	<u>Ontario</u>	<u>Prairie Provinces</u>	<u>British Columbia</u>	<u>Canada</u>
Jan. 1, 1921	95.9	80.3	83.4	95.7	86.6	87.7
Feb. 1	96.3	90.4	88.1	93.7	87.2	90.1
Mar. 1	90.7	88.7	86.2	91.0	87.3	88.0
Apr. 1	87.2	80.4	83.5	88.7	88.1	84.1
May 1	87.5	80.8	83.6	86.6	90.1	84.1
Jun. 1	89.5	83.4	84.9	91.1	93.3	86.6
Jul. 1	89.0	87.2	84.2	94.7	92.5	87.5
Aug. 1	91.2	87.8	85.0	97.5	96.3	88.9
Sep. 1	93.5	87.4	83.7	98.5	95.6	88.7
Oct. 1	92.1	89.2	85.9	100.0	96.4	90.2
Nov. 1	91.4	87.5	87.0	102.6	94.3	90.2
Dec. 1	89.5	83.7	85.9	95.6	88.9	87.2
Jan. 1, 1922	78.1	74.4	78.3	82.8	79.9	77.9
Feb. 1	76.8	74.6	79.5	83.0	84.3	78.9
Mar. 1	80.7	80.6	81.7	84.4	85.3	81.9
Apr. 1	80.6	77.5	81.1	82.1	85.9	80.6
May 1	83.0	81.2	82.4	85.4	91.3	83.3
Jun. 1	87.4	88.1	87.8	92.8	96.6	89.2
Jul. 1	92.6	88.0	89.2	99.7	99.3	91.1
Aug. 1	94.0	90.3	90.8	101.5	99.8	93.1
Sep. 1	90.3	91.6	91.9	101.2	102.0	93.7
Oct. 1	91.8	92.0	93.6	101.9	100.1	94.6
Nov. 1	91.7	92.7	94.9	105.0	100.2	95.8
Dec. 1	92.1	93.9	94.4	101.5	95.6	95.1
Jan. 1, 1923	90.8	83.5	85.6	90.0	88.3	86.3
Feb. 1	90.4	87.7	90.0	91.6	88.4	89.5
Mar. 1	90.7	87.9	90.8	88.9	92.0	89.9
Apr. 1	90.5	85.5	88.4	83.5	92.8	87.6
May 1	90.0	90.3	91.6	90.4	97.5	91.4
Jun. 1	93.9	99.1	96.8	95.5	100.4	97.3
Jul. 1	101.0	100.5	97.2	101.4	103.9	99.5
Aug. 1	97.8	101.9	97.1	104.3	107.2	100.2
Sep. 1	101.4	100.1	98.1	101.1	106.6	100.1
Oct. 1	97.0	104.0	96.0	100.7	104.2	99.5
Nov. 1	95.2	103.2	96.0	99.2	102.3	98.8
Dec. 1	91.2	98.5	93.4	99.3	97.8	95.7

TABLE II. Index Numbers of Employment by Principal Cities.

	<u>Montreal</u>	<u>Toronto</u>	<u>Ottawa</u>	<u>Hamilton</u>	<u>Winnipeg</u>	<u>Vancouver</u>
Jan. 1, 1922	73.2	85.1	-	-	85.2	79.9
Feb. 1	73.6	81.3	-	-	84.1	88.7
Mar. 1	80.5	81.9	-	-	82.6	91.1
Apr. 1	76.0	82.7	-	-	83.6	87.8
May 1	82.1	84.9	-	-	88.6	95.4
Jun. 1	85.9	86.6	-	-	92.9	97.5
Jul. 1	88.2	88.4	-	-	92.8	97.4
Aug. 1	88.6	88.1	-	-	96.5	96.3
Sep. 1	90.5	88.3	-	-	98.9	102.2
Oct. 1	92.3	90.9	-	-	98.8	100.7
Nov. 1	92.6	92.2	-	-	99.5	94.9
Dec. 1	94.7	92.9	-	-	97.8	90.7
Jan. 1, 1923	79.8	84.7	94.4	81.5	92.6	87.7
Feb. 1	86.2	88.5	95.7	86.0	89.0	85.8
Mar. 1	85.9	85.7	92.2	89.2	86.4	90.4
Apr. 1	83.3	86.7	90.6	88.4	85.7	86.9
May 1	88.8	88.1	94.8	92.6	86.3	91.2
Jun. 1	95.4	89.9	109.6	94.6	87.1	94.7
Jul. 1	95.9	89.5	110.2	91.4	87.7	100.3
Aug. 1	97.3	89.1	109.3	93.3	87.5	103.6
Sep. 1	93.6	89.6	107.5	92.2	89.9	104.3
Oct. 1	98.7	90.1	105.5	91.1	89.4	101.6
Nov. 1	99.1	89.9	103.8	89.7	88.6	98.6
Dec. 1	93.6	90.2	94.3	88.5	88.2	98.1

Note.—The number employed in January, 1920, is taken as 100 in every case.

TABLE III. Index Numbers of Employment by Industries.

	Manufacturing	Logging	Mining	Communication	Transportation	Construction & Maintenance	Services	Trade	All Industries
1921									
Jan. 1	78.4	82.6	100.3	105.4	103.0	102.9	94.5	100.4	87.7
Feb. 1	84.8	94.3	95.8	104.6	101.3	100.1	94.2	92.5	90.1
Mar. 1	84.6	81.8	92.3	104.1	95.8	89.2	95.2	92.0	88.0
Apr. 1	80.7	44.5	88.0	101.8	95.5	86.7	97.8	92.5	84.1
May 1	80.2	49.5	86.9	103.1	94.0	92.7	93.3	94.2	84.1
Jun. 1	81.1	47.3	88.7	106.1	98.1	111.9	103.8	92.5	86.6
Jul. 1	80.9	35.4	92.2	107.4	99.6	126.7	108.0	92.7	87.5
Aug. 1	81.3	32.3	91.0	107.1	102.7	144.6	107.7	91.4	88.9
Sep. 1	79.3	41.9	96.0	106.8	106.6	141.6	107.3	92.1	88.7
Oct. 1	81.3	48.1	96.4	105.1	109.6	142.5	104.5	92.4	90.2
Nov. 1	81.1	59.7	98.1	104.5	110.5	136.3	96.0	93.0	90.2
Dec. 1	79.3	61.2	98.0	103.8	106.9	113.2	93.4	96.3	87.2
1922									
Jan. 1	68.7	59.5	93.0	101.1	99.2	92.4	92.9	96.9	77.9
Feb. 1	73.0	61.5	89.7	95.7	97.0	79.8	91.7	90.3	78.9
Mar. 1	78.1	54.8	90.3	92.5	97.1	85.7	93.0	88.2	81.9
Apr. 1	78.0	27.2	83.9	98.2	96.3	81.4	94.6	88.6	80.6
May 1	79.0	37.0	90.2	100.4	98.7	101.1	95.6	90.1	83.3
Jun. 1	84.2	37.5	92.6	100.6	106.2	129.5	100.3	90.0	89.2
Jul. 1	84.2	31.4	94.4	100.6	109.2	157.4	104.4	90.7	91.1
Aug. 1	85.8	27.9	96.2	103.1	111.6	159.4	104.7	90.1	93.1
Sep. 1	86.5	36.5	97.1	103.4	111.9	164.3	105.0	90.8	93.7
Oct. 1	86.7	42.1	101.1	102.8	114.0	166.2	103.0	91.9	94.6
Nov. 1	87.7	66.0	104.5	102.2	114.7	153.2	96.6	93.3	95.8
Dec. 1	87.7	84.7	102.8	101.5	115.3	122.6	95.8	97.0	95.1
1923									
Jan. 1	78.1	87.0	100.8	97.4	104.8	96.0	92.8	98.2	86.3
Feb. 1	85.0	95.1	101.3	96.5	101.5	86.0	92.4	93.7	89.5
Mar. 1	87.5	88.8	98.6	97.4	99.3	83.8	93.4	88.9	89.9
Apr. 1	85.6	57.8	97.0	98.0	100.2	85.2	94.9	90.2	87.6
May 1	90.5	48.0	96.7	99.7	101.7	101.6	97.1	91.7	91.4
Jun. 1	93.5	52.7	101.6	102.2	109.0	140.2	108.8	91.9	97.3
Jul. 1	93.6	48.4	101.6	103.4	112.2	169.1	115.1	92.3	99.5
Aug. 1	93.5	42.2	101.0	105.2	113.4	183.7	113.7	91.7	100.2
Sep. 1	93.0	43.1	104.0	106.4	113.4	180.9	120.3	92.0	100.1
Oct. 1	91.8	51.7	104.9	106.6	116.2	171.8	112.7	93.2	99.5
Nov. 1	91.2	62.6	105.4	105.3	116.8	159.3	105.5	93.1	98.8
Dec. 1	88.2	82.2	105.9	106.1	113.8	125.2	106.2	96.8	95.7

